E-5 (1928-1930) 1932 Southeast Salish
Sanpoil

THE CYCLE OF LIFE

BIRTH AND INFANCY

In considering the life of the individual it is necessary to begin with conception, for the actions of the parents during the months prior to birth of a child were considered of major importance in determining the characteristics and fortunes of that child. The mother's conduct was of greater importance than the father's as regarded the child's future, and the majority of the tabus were directed against her, but the father's actions were also considerably circumscribed. The first pregnancy tabus were more strict than those enforced subsequently, or at least they were more rigidly complied with. During the latter months of the first pregnancy a woman's mother usually stayed close by her, encouraging her, acquainting her with customary methods of discharging duties which befell a mother, and making certain that the pregnancy tabus were not broken. Since residence was patrilocal it was necessary for the pregnant woman (sɪtamtukui'ltxᵊ) to change temporarily her abode to that of her mother. The husband usually stayed with his own people until shortly before the child's arrival. 843

The period of the first pregnancy was characterized by Burke as one of unhappiness and fear. It seems that the older women, including the mother, repeatedly cautioned the young woman that she would die if any of the multitudinous tabus were broken.[1] In addition to the observance of these tabus, the woman was required to undergo a regular program of physical exercise. This consisted principally of swimming (in cold water), walking, running, and (recently) horseback riding. A pregnant woman was required to get up no later than sunrise and was not allowed to sleep during the daytime. These rules were designed to strengthen the woman in preparation for the ordeal to come. 152 861 843

There was no tabu against quarreling, but care had to be taken about insulting another or incurring his ill will for fear he might have power to inflict malfortune upon the child. The woman was required to eat only lightly during pregnancy, else her health would be impaired, the child's head would be large and delivery difficult. Specific food tabus usually applied both to a woman and her husband. Some of these follow: Speckled trout was prohibited; if eaten the child would cry a great deal and shake like a trout. Rabbit was not to be eaten; if it were the child would have weak legs. The flesh of the hawk and eagle or anything killed by those birds were tabu; if the tabu were broken the child would have cramps. If pheasant were eaten the child would cry until out of breath, then have convulsions. Meat in general was not eaten for an indefinite period preceding childbirth, and at no time during pregnancy was any meat eaten which was not strictly fresh. Eating of the fool hen was prohibited; else the child would be foolish. 262 [578] 843

Tabus other than those relating to food were of various natures. A pregnant woman was permitted to attend funerals, but not to look at the corpse. If she did her child would be cross-eyed and open-mouthed, like the corpse. She was not allowed to go near any thing that had been recently killed, and had carefully to 784 843

[1] Burke knew of only one woman that had actually died during childbirth.

2: Ray E-5 (1928-1930) 1932 Southeast Salish
Sanpoil

776 only to a close relative, usually a son, of the deceased person. To him the spirit-ghost, in the guise of the deceased, appeared in a dream and asked to be accepted. This usually happened within a year after the death of the spirit's owner. The spirit-ghost spoke to the dreamer in the following tenor: "I am your father. I want you to imitate me. I'll do good for you if you will do good for me. I'm lost now and I want you for my master." A specific instance was that of John Tom. His father died while John was yet quite young. He had been Salmon Chief and had Chinook salmon as guardian spirit. The spirit-ghost appeared to young Tom, who later became Salmon Chief.

You are my son. I want to talk to you. After I leave you always remember me. I have power over one thing. When you need food go down to the stream. Build a trap. You can always catch me.

753 756 776 The one addressed was not privileged to reject the proposal without becoming seriously ill. And yet, acceptance too, involved unavoidable illness unless one's former power were greater than that which he was to receive from the spirit-ghost. Such illnesses necessitated calling a shaman. A person sometimes became similarly ill without having had a dream. After a diagnosis the shaman might declare the illness to be the effect of a spirit-ghost visitation. In either case the shaman's immediate object was to remove the spirit-ghost. This was done in the usual manner of drawing out. In the case of a very strong spirit-ghost the process was a very difficult one. In the meantime the patient suffered great agony. The illness was similar to that caused by a visitation of an ordinary spirit, but more intense. Once removed, the spirit-ghost might be destroyed, taken by the shaman or returned to the patient. The shaman often appropriated a desirable spirit for himself without obtaining the consent of the patient. The latter had no recourse because his powers were less than those of the shaman. Very often the spirit-ghost was destroyed at the request of the patient. This was done by washing it away in water or blowing it away. When the patient desired the return of his power the shaman blew it back at him. If a person kept the power he paid the shaman a large fee for his services. On the other hand, if he offered it to the shaman the latter made no charge.

752 [illegible] 753 776 But spirit-ghost power was more often relinquished than kept. While the additional power was always helpful it was also often dangerous even after it had been "conquered" by the shaman and returned. An older spirit, for instance, might be driven away by the new power and illness result. Moreover, upon taking a spirit-ghost a person had to sing the new song for several days following, and at the next winter dance sing it in public and at the same time give away many presents. The acceptance of these presents did not involve reciprocal gifts. Nor was this the only time that presents without return had to be given. Upon every subsequent use of the spirit-ghost song gifts had to be distributed. The spirit-ghost sometimes designated what presents were to be given at winter dances. The message was given in a dream and was always accompanied by an illness—a feeling of lonesomeness—similar to that caused by ordinary spirits but more severe.

2: Ray E-5 (1928-1930) 1932 Southeast Salish
Sanpoil

He soon localized the pain (or the cause of the pain). It was most often found in the patient's body in the region of the heart or in the head, but sometimes it was found somewhere in the air about him. The spirit was then removed by the shaman in the customary manner, but instead of being destroyed or blown away it was blown back to the patient. But before returning it the shaman held it in his hands for a moment so that he might "hear" the new spirit song of the patient. This song he began to sing. The patient soon took it up and the shaman ceased. Sometimes the shaman sang the entire song before the patient began; at other times the song was only started by the shaman, being finished by its owner. After receiving back his spirit and his song the patient was able to leave his bed. For two or three days following he sang the new song almost continuously. The shaman remained during this time for although his patient was no longer in pain there was danger that he might suddenly lose consciousness while singing and only the shaman could revive him. Neighbors usually gathered to assist in the singing. They amused themselves when not singing by gambling and chatting or telling stories. But the patient entered into none of these activities. Nor did he eat with the others. He either observed a fast or took only such food as he had been told to eat at this time by his guardian spirit.

A spirit visitation was properly followed by an inaugural dance given by the novice.* Since such dances were held only in the winter (January-February) it was necessary for the shaman to use his power to "hold off" the spirit of his patient until that time if the return had taken place other than in the early winter. From the time of the initial spirit singing until the dance was given, the novice was subject to a recurrence of his illness.

The shaman's payment for treating a person suffering from spirit sickness was called xa'q̓aman. This fee was not larger than the charges for other types of illness.

During subsequent winters a similar feeling of loneliness was often felt but it was not as intense and did not necessitate calling a shaman or giving a dance. It was only necessary to sing and dance to relieve the despondency.

A novice sometimes made a power stick or spirit wand (t'aki'kstən) shortly after the return of his guardian spirit. This was done only when specifically requested by the spirit. These sticks varied from two to seven feet in length and were about an inch in diameter. They were not painted, but to them were fastened deer dew claws, bear claws, teeth, shells or beads. The sticks represented guardian spirits and some object attached was usually symbolic of the spirit.

Burke's maternal grandmother had one of these sticks. Hers was about thirty inches long and at the top was a cross piece five inches long. It was made of wuʒwa'xa·'lpᵘ. The entire stick including the handle was covered with red and white beads.

The stick belonging to a man named ilɩ'ʒ was six feet long and very slender. It, too, was covered with beads, and hanging from the top were several deer dew claws. It had no cross piece.

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*Described on pages 189 f.

2; Ray E-5 (1928-1930) 1932 Southeast Salish
Sanpoil

These sticks were used for tapping time when persons were singing their spirit songs in the winter. They kept their owners from becoming "too lonesome."

Spirit power was never, in itself, dangerous to its owner. However, as Burke said, those who began to use their power in a vindictive manner and for evil purposes soon fell victim to someone with stronger power. Also, the commands given by a spirit were for a person's good and if disobeyed sickness resulted. This was not felt to be retribution on the part of the spirit.

Spirit power had to be exercised to be effective. The fact that a person had obtained a powerful tutelary did not indicate what his future fortunes were to be. If he neglected his power—did not practice the talents given him—it played no part in his life. It was necessary that a person "think" of his guardian before it would help him. The fact that persons who had been granted immunity to arrow shots, for instance, sometimes died from arrow wounds, was accounted for by saying that they could not have been thinking of their powers when struck. I was repeatedly told that one's spirit came to help him during severe illness but at such time a person was most apt to be thinking of his guardian. Individuals did not test their powers without occasion. One possessing the power mentioned above, immunity to arrow wounds, would never have another shoot at him to prove the immunity, but he might take unnecessary chances in actual combat.

Power could be stolen by a shaman. (This was often done at the winter dances.) The person losing his power had to enlist the services of a stronger shaman to get it back, or soon die. But power could not be traded nor could it be transferred except possibly from an old man to a young boy. However, a woman with deer power, for instance, could help a male relative on his hunting ventures by thinking about her guardian while the hunter was away. He would find game easily.

There was no tabu against killing one's guardian animal. On the contrary, the animal expected to be killed. A man with deer power was always a good hunter for the deer would come to him to be killed. When something of the genus of one's guardian was killed it was customary to keep some part to insure success on subsequent ventures. Thus a backbone of the otter, the hoof tuft of a deer, the bones of salmon or the feathers of a bird were kept and worn. From these symbols (tca'sula) others often inferred the nature of one's guardian.

There was some reticence about telling of one's guardian spirit experience, especially on other than ceremonial occasions. A person's experiences were nearly always told at least at the inaugural dance, but it was a person's privilege to remain silent at other times if he so desired. But the symbols worn, the dance actions, and general pursuits of an individual usually conveyed to others a true notion of one's spirit. It was not customary to tell guardian experiences during crises.

Power declined with age. With loss of physical strength and attractiveness spirits came to one's aid less and less often. At ninety John Tom no longer received help from any of his numerous guardians. He lived through a seven day involuntary fast but he did not credit his power with being responsible for his survival.

5: Teit E-5 (1904-09) 1930 Southeast Salish
Coeur d'Alene

men were stationed along the top of the ridge, some distance back from the bluff, and others in the same way at the bottom. A runway or passage was left for the deer to reach the lake along the base of the bluff. Canoes were concealed behind the bluff. When the deer found that they were entrapped, they ran into the lake, where the canoes attacked them, the women paddling, and the men shooting. All deer entering the water were soon overtaken and killed. Those that tried to pass back on the drivers, or through the men stationed at the sides above and below, were also as a rule killed. Any that returned from the water when the attack by the canoes commenced were met by the men stationed near the foot of the bluff, who advanced to the water edge when they saw that the deer had taken to the water.

After the introduction of horses, game—even antelope—was sometimes run down on open ground, but this kind of hunting was not always successful. Buffalo were hunted by parties of mounted men advancing on them in a line, usually not far apart, and often quite close together At a signal given by the hunting chief, the hunters dashed at full speed at the herd of buffalo, stampeding them. They shot and speared the animals in the rear and sides of the herd. The pursuit and slaughter continued until the party considered that they had sufficient meat and skins. Occasionally, in the excitement, more were killed than the party required, and only the choicest meat, fat, and skins were taken. Buffalo were also stampeded over cliffs above coulees, and sometimes killed in large numbers by the fall. It is said, however, that this method of driving over cliffs was not used by the Coeur d'Alêne in their own country when hunting elk or other kinds of game. Possibly the timbered nature of the country and the contour of the hills did not favor its employment there.

Decoy dresses made of the heads and skins of animals were used by some men in still hunting to approach the game before shooting. Headbands and caps set with horns, ears, or side feathers were also used. Antelope were frequently approached in this way.

Deer and elk were called both by direct imitation and with calls made of wood.

Animals, such as deer, were cut up in the same way as among the Thompson [169] and their skins were also often used as temporary bags for carrying meat to camp. It seems, however, that the long stick that was put inside the bag for stretching it was not used by the Coeur d'Alêne. (Fig. 11.)

Spring pole snares for catching the feet of deer, like those common among the Thompson,[170] were not used, but deer fences were erected and snares set in the openings. These consisted of ordinary running nooses of Indian-hemp rope. The end of this rope was fastened to a

[169] *a*, p. 248.

[170] *a*, fig. 228.

5: Teit E-5 (1904-09) 1930 Southeast Salish
Coeur d'Alêne

and especially to the Coeur d'Alêne, who depended on fishing salmon and digging bitterroot within Spokan territory. All trading was also stopped. A Coeur d'Alêne chief [216] went to a salmon-fishing place on the Little Spokane. Coeur d'Alêne parties had been in the habit of going there annually to fish and play games with the Spokan. It was the fishing season, but no one was there. The chief felt very sorrowful when he saw the place look so deserted. He thought of the many good times and all the fun the Coeur d'Alêne and Spokan had so often had together at this place. He returned home, and called the other Coeur d'Alêne chiefs to a council. Six chiefs met him. He told how he had gone to the fishing place, and how he had sat down and had been overcome with sorrow when he viewed its loneliness, and had thought of the mirth and happiness that used to be there. Now there was no fishing there, and there were no games. All was as if dead. He said he wanted peace, and intended to give his daughter to the Spokan chief to make peace. All the other chiefs agreed with him. The girl was advised that she was to be made a sacrifice for peace, and that there was a possibility that the Spokan would kill her. She said she was willing to do as her father and the other chiefs advised, even if she should lose her life. She dressed herself in her best clothes, and the chiefs gave her a load of fine robes and valuables to carry as presents to the Spokan. Some Coeur d'Alêne men followed her, keeping out of sight. They were sent to learn her fate. One night, after traveling several days without seeing any one, she had a dream in which she was told that she would see people on the morrow. The following morning, shortly after leaving her camp, she saw in the distance a flock of flying cranes making a great noise. She thought people must have startled them, and she went in that direction. After a time she met a Spokan woman, and sat down to chat with her. She told her the errand she was on, and added, "If the Spokan kill me, I do not care; for I have been sent as a sacrifice by my father and the other Coeur d'Alêne chiefs, who all desire peace and a renewal of the friendly relations that formerly existed between the tribes. They are sorry that there is no more intercourse between us." The woman told her to sit where she was. She would go and see the people. This place was not far from Chewelah. A large number of Spokan were encamped there. When the Spokan chief learned of her mission, he sent out some young men to invite her in and to carry the presents she brought. After making a speech to all the people, he distributed the presents among them, and told them that he would take the girl to wife. She was a good girl, and henceforth lived with the Spokan. Shortly afterwards the chiefs of the two tribes met, and a permanent peace was arranged. This

[216] Some informants say it was the chief who killed his wife, but most informants say another chief.

5: Teit E-5 (1904-09) 1930 Southeast Salish
Coeur d'Alene

was the last war with the Spokan. Since then the two tribes have always been the best of friends.

Wars with the Kalispel.—Long ago there were several short wars with the Kalispel, and the two tribes sent war parties into each other's territories. Once, in one of the last wars with the Kalispel, the great-grandfather of head chief Saltis of the Coeur d'Alêne was camped with some other men at Sawmill, a place near De Smet. He had three children—one a grown-up lad, and the others a little boy and girl. The Kalispel had invaded the country. They found this camp, attacked it and mortally wounded the men. The lad ran with his brother by his side, and carried his sister under his arm. His brother was shot. When he looked at his sister, he saw that she also had been killed by a shot. He continued running to some bushes, where he hid. Presently two of the enemy came along, riding the same horse. The halter rope was dragging along the ground. As they passed, the lad seized the end of the rope and jerked the horse, dismounting the two men, who ran off. The lad then mounted the horse and rode away. The men shot arrows at him, wounding him slightly, but he escaped. There were several Pend d'Oreilles and Flathead among this Kalispel war party. These tribes were all allies, and they often had joint war parties.

Wars with the Pend d'Oreilles.[217]—Long ago there were sometimes wars with the Pend d'Oreilles, who generally were the aggressors and invaded the Coeur d'Alêne territory. The Coeur d'Alêne never sent war parties into the countries of the Pend d'Oreilles and Flathead. Once, at a time when the Pend d'Oreilles and Flathead had their first guns, but the Coeur d'Alêne as yet had none, a war party of Pend d'Oreilles, including a number of Flathead, led by a famous chief called *Qutɛna'lqʷ* entered the Coeur d'Alêne country and attacked a camp of about a dozen people who were gathering camas at a place about a mile east of De Smet Mission. A fight took place, and most of the Coeur d'Alêne were killed. A woman and her two little sons were taken captive. In the fight one Flathead had become separated from his friends and for a time was unable to find them. The Pend d'Oreilles, thinking he had been killed, said, "We will kill the woman to make even the loss of our friend." They dismounted, and stabbed the woman with a very large knife, the kind used by the Flathead, which was different from the knives of the Coeur d'Alêne. Before stabbing her, they made her tell where the other camps of her tribe were located. They did not

[217] The narrator hesitated to tell this story. He suggested that if it were printed it might hurt the feelings of some Pend d'Oreilles and Flathead. He believed that these evil doings of the past should be forgotten, and that people should not continue to tell them to their children; that anything which might cause bitter feelings to a people or wound their pride should be avoided.

5: Teit E-5 (1904-09) 1930 Southeast Salish
Coeur d'Alene

be thick and long in after years. The period of training for boys was longer than that for girls, and appears to have been conducted in the same manner as among the Thompson and Nez Percé.[369] The importance to boys of gaining a guardian spirit was much greater than to girls; and it seems that training was always continued by boys until this object was attained. All persons training, whether male or female, obtained "power" or "mystery" in some degree. A person who went through no training would not be efficient in physique or in skill. Neither would one be as hardy, energetic, and industrious as a person who had trained even a little. Considerable importance was attached to mental training in certain ways. To attain success, persons had to concentrate the mind as much as possible on the object of their desire. They tried thus to obtain a vision. Emotions, such as anger, disappointment, sexual desires, should be suppressed. The youth should enter into a state of calm and expectancy. With the guardian spirit the novice generally obtained a song. Some obtained more than one song from their guardian spirits. Sometimes the song was heard and no one seen. Some obtained several guardian spirits and several songs, generally one from each. Some men could get *en rapport* with their guardian spirits at will, and were informed by the latter of things that would happen. Some could tell what people said about them behind their backs, and they could read people's thoughts and judge their intentions. Many of these men became shamans.

The old people made boys and girls bathe in cold water every day. This was to make them strong, hardy, and able to endure cold. It was also believed to make them healthy, immune from colds and sickness, and able to recover quickly from wounds.

TATTOOING.—The first tattooing on boys and girls was generally done at the age of puberty. Some of the designs tattooed, especially those on boys, were records of their dreams or visions in the same way as were some face and body paintings. Some believed that they had a protective influence, or formed a sympathetic bond between the individual and his guardian. Some marks were pictures of the guardian spirit himself (p. 193).

SCARIFICATION.—Scarification was practiced by all young men during their training at puberty. Cuts were generally made on the arms and legs, and sometimes on the insteps, and backs of the hands and fingers. Some men training to be shamans or warriors cut their bodies as well. Sometimes a long slash followed each rib; or, again, many short horizontal cuts, occasionally close together, one above the other, were made on the upper arms or elsewhere. Some youths rubbed charcoal, or white or red ochre, into the wounds, which, when they healed, were similar to tattoo marks. Others who did not do

[369] *a*, pp. 317-321, *b*, 247-250.

7:Teit E-5 (1904-1909) 1930 NR19 Southeast Salish NR19
Kalispel
Spokan

to put a small cross stick in its mouth to keep it open, and sometimes also a skewer through its body. A cup was placed underneath to catch the poison which ran from its mouth, the toad being left hanging until dead. Some women, instead of this, put the toad on a flat rock, placed another flat stone on top, and crushed it to death. The juices of the body were then collected and put on food to be eaten by the person to be poisoned. When a person ate toad poison his stomach was spoiled, he lost his appetite, and died as if in consumption. Women sometimes poisoned men through jealousy.

278
191*

[152]